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The President's Daily Brief

April 27, 1976

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Exempt from general
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exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
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USSR: *The selection of a successor to the late Soviet Defense Minister Grechko should pose no insurmountable problem for General Secretary Brezhnev.*

Brezhnev is in a stronger position now in relation to his colleagues than he was when the previous defense minister, Marshal Malinovsky, died in 1967. Moreover, the suddenness of Grechko's death offers little time for maneuver among potential successors.

The new defense minister must be acceptable to both the political leadership and the military establishment. A decision must also be made as to whether he will be seated soon on the Politburo or only after having demonstrated his loyalty for some years, as Grechko had before he became a Politburo member.

A delay would leave the military unrepresented on the Politburo while the Foreign Ministry, KGB, and arms producers would continue to have their interests represented on that body. To seat the new defense minister on the Politburo either immediately or in the near future, however, would seem to confirm the right of the military to Politburo representation--something the civilian leadership has been reluctant to do in the past.

The new minister will probably be announced in a week or so. In our view the most likely choice is General Viktor Kulikov, the first deputy minister of defense, who is also chief of the General Staff.

Kulikov, age 55, has held these jobs since 1971 and is probably sufficiently experienced to make the move to the full ministerial post with relative ease. He appears to be on good terms with Brezhnev and with at least some of the other Politburo members.

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His colleagues within the Soviet military establishment reportedly hold him in high esteem.

Another good possibility is Marshal Ivan Yakubovsky, the first deputy minister who commands the Warsaw Pact forces. Yakubovsky, 64, was the senior officer in the ministry after Grechko, but he might be unacceptable to the political leadership.

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TANZANIA-CUBA-RHODESIA:

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PORTUGAL: *The indecisive results of the legislative election on Sunday open many options for the formation of the next government, and political leaders are already maneuvering for a role.*

The Socialists will come under heavy pressure from all sides in the two months before the presidential election and the installation of a new government. Their plurality of 35 percent compared to 24 percent for their nearest rival, the Popular Democrats, means that a coalition would not be feasible without the Socialists.

Popular Democratic Party Secretary General Sa Carneiro and Social Democratic Center leader Freitas do Amaral have already called on Socialist leader Mario Soares to join them in a government coalition. Soares rejected their appeals, but press reports say other influential Socialist leaders believe a coalition is inevitable.

Soares' stated objection is based upon his belief that the country's burdensome economic problems can only be solved by a government which is not divided over domestic policy.

Although Soares has doggedly held his ground on this point, he confirmed in a recent conversation with US Ambassador Carlucci that he would view an alliance with the Popular Democrats much more favorably if Sa Carneiro were replaced as party chief by Minister of Internal Commerce Magalhaes Mota.

A Socialist attempt to form an alliance with the Communists cannot be ruled out, but Soares' heated denial of such intentions during the campaign, coupled with strong opposition from both "operationals"

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in the Portuguese military and Portugal's NATO allies, would seem to diminish considerably the chances for such a combination.

The Communists' best hope of participation would be in a "government of national salvation" formed to avert a serious political crisis--a possibility Soares alluded to in an interview on Sunday.

The present stalemate could continue until the presidential election, a possibility that is likely to put growing pressure on party and military leaders to agree on a joint candidate to avoid a divisive campaign and minimize political instability during the next two months.

* * *

LEBANON: *The fighting has subsided since President Franjiyah's decision over the weekend to permit the election of his successor, but the problem persists of how Lebanese authorities can arrange adequate security to permit the convocation of parliament before the Sunday deadline set by the Muslim left.*

The speaker of parliament believes the session should be postponed for at least a week. He is seeking the advice of the Syrians and Palestinians, whose forces will have primary responsibility for the safety of the deputies.

The haphazard security arranged for the brief parliamentary meeting earlier this month provided little real protection for the deputies. It would be inadequate for this session, especially if the principal parties have not agreed in advance on Franjiyah's successor.

Neither Raymond Edde nor Ilyas Sarkis, the two leading contenders, has made much headway in his campaign.

President Franjiyah's determination to block the election of Edde or any other candidate sympathetic to the leftists could break the deadlock in Sarkis' favor. Franjiyah

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is especially worried that Edde would try to unearth evidence of corruption during Franjiyah's administration. The President reportedly has recently threatened not to resign if he is not satisfied with his successor.

Meanwhile, one of the top generals on the Israeli general staff has warned that the threat of an attack from across the Lebanese border will increase no matter what the eventual outcome is in Lebanon.

Major General Adam told a group of military correspondents on Sunday that Israel has already had to reinforce its defensive positions along the Lebanese border. He said the border must now be considered "a new frontier of confrontation," presumably like those with Syria, Egypt, and Jordan.

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NOTES

Panama is preparing to seize US and other foreign fishing vessels operating off its coast.

[redacted]

April 26.

[redacted] chief of government Torrijos discussed the possibility of seizing foreign fishing boats and levying large fines against them. 25X1

There may be several motives for Panama's action. The canal treaty negotiations with the US have slowed, and action against US boats would enable Torrijos to deflect possible domestic criticism by showing that he does not fear Washington. The tuna and shrimping season is under way, and the Panamanians may be sensitive to encroachments on their fishing zones. Panama claims a 200-mile territorial sea but has not aggressively pursued its claim. Torrijos may feel that similar US legislation will make it difficult for the US to react forcefully. Finally, the Panamanians are in a financial squeeze and may hope to resolve a number of problems through the use of revenue from the fines.

* * *

Two Chinese surface ships, visually sighted on April 25 by a US navy patrol aircraft north of the Fiji Islands, may be supporting the Han submarine that we suspect is in this area.

The US aircraft also detected several underwater explosions near the surface ships, suggesting that the Chinese were conducting hydroacoustic tests or were signaling the submarine.

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Japan

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Egypt

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A Mozambican *military delegation has been in the* USSR *since late last week presumably discussing economic and military assistance.*

After years of insurgency against the Portuguese, Mozambique is just beginning to shape its guerrilla fighters into a conventional force. The military has little in the way of heavy equipment and presumably is looking to Moscow to help satisfy its requirements. The delegation may also be looking for Soviet economic assistance; Mozambique is sustaining substantial money losses as a result of closing its border with Rhodesia.

Mozambican commercial and information officers visited Moscow earlier. The USSR is increasingly important as a source of trade and arms to the Machel regime.

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